What Is Biological Psychiatry? By Thomas Gazda

Experienced psychoanalyst Thomas Gazda has an extensive background in applying psychodynamic principles to crisis intervention and psychotherapy. Holding a variety of teaching and consultancy positions, Thomas Gazda possesses expertise in biological psychiatry.  
  
Sometimes known as [biopsychiatry](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Biological_psychiatry), biological psychiatry uses biological functions of the brain to understand mental disorders. This interdisciplinary approach draws on concepts from physiology, genetics, neuroscience, and biochemistry to formulate theories on psychopathology and the basis of behavior.   
  
While the study of biological psychiatry dates back to ancient Greece, psychoanalysts including Sigmund Freud began to conduct more in-depth inquiries into the subject during the 20th century. Today, most biopsychiatry research focuses on the biological sources of more prevalent mental illnesses like bipolar disorder and Alzheimer’s disease.   
  
Critics of biopsychiatry maintain that there is no dependable testing method to identify the biological basis of mental disorders. Thus, they reject the idea that the biological makeup of the brain has anything to do with emotional disturbances.